



St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Rowhedge

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115077
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279509
Inspection dates 22 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Messer AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rectory Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		CO5 7HR
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206 728517
Number on roll	171	Fax number	01206 729563
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Bob Coote
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Ruth Cooke

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This village school is much smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry is slightly below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. This school requires significant improvement in relation to the lack of sufficient progress that pupils make in English, mathematics and science and the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils. The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress. Lesson time is lost when teachers have to spend time dealing with the poor behaviour of some pupils. However, a good behaviour strategy has been introduced, it is used across the school and there are signs that behaviour is improving. Staff have not received enough help and support to improve their performance. Teachers' expectations are limited, tasks do not meet the pupils' learning needs and as a consequence teaching is inadequate. Subject leaders have not been effective in driving up standards. The school has not measured the progress that pupils make systematically and it has not set challenging targets to help pupils aim high and achieve well. The school has some strengths, particularly in respect of the quality of leadership provided by the new headteacher and her deputy. Together with the governing body they have made good plans for improvement. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children settle happily in the reception class and make sound progress. The school's self-evaluation has recognised the school's inadequacies and the senior management team is taking appropriate measures to improve matters. Finances are managed well to keep class sizes small. Classrooms are well equipped but the school has not capitalised on the good facilities nor on the good ratio of adults to pupils to promote good progress. Consequently the school provides unsatisfactory value for money. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. However, there are clear signs that the school has begun to improve and that it has satisfactory capacity to continue this upward trend.

What the school should do to improve further

- Rigorously monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and provide teachers with clear advice on how to improve their performance. - Raise teachers' expectations of the quality of work that pupils produce in English, mathematics and science. - As a matter of urgency take stronger measures to improve pupils' behaviour. - Systematically measure the amount of progress that pupils make and use the resulting data to set short-term targets for them in English, mathematics and science. - Develop the role of subject leaders so that they are enabled to take a full part in raising standards across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children's achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and most are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in mathematics and reach standards that are above average. In reading and writing, achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below average. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory and standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties do not make enough progress because their needs have only recently been clearly identified. Across the school the continuity of pupils' learning has been interrupted by staff absence and changes in teaching staff. The school sets challenging targets for its performance in national tests in English and mathematics. This year the school's assessments indicate that it is unlikely to meet these targets. Shorter term targets for pupils to aim at in English, mathematics and science have not been set consistently. This limits the amount of progress that pupils make.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 4

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are inadequate. The large majority enjoy coming to school and appreciate the help and support they receive. Attendance is just below the national average, but the attendance of a small number of pupils is poor. Similarly, the behaviour of a sizeable minority is unsatisfactory and it is having a disproportionate effect on the majority of pupils who want to learn. Some are defiant and refuse to follow instructions. Many parents expressed their concerns about behaviour. A small number of boys have been excluded for short periods. Most pupils appreciate the praise and rewards they receive for behaving and attending well, but some staff do not use the recently adopted behaviour management systems consistently. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has worked hard to raise pupils' awareness of the unacceptability of bullying. Pupils and parents recognise that bullying does occur, but believe that it is dealt with effectively. Relationships among pupils are generally warm. Most work and play happily together. Pupils develop a sound moral code and understand right from wrong. They raise money for good causes enthusiastically. Pupils are appropriately involved in taking responsibility for helping with daily tasks. They are involved in decision making and the class representatives on the school council discuss school issues sensibly. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and the need for regular exercise. However, they are not yet developing a satisfactory range of the key skills they need in literacy, numeracy and ICT to underpin their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. There is some effective teaching but not enough to make the necessary improvements in standards. In lessons where they are given interesting and demanding work, pupils are well motivated. However, in some classes pupils lose interest because tasks are not challenging enough. Often teachers' expectations of pupils' performance are too low. The management of the pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. Pupils say that they are unhappy when their work is interrupted by the poor behaviour of a few pupils. Parents are equally unhappy that this occurs. Senior managers have devised a rigorous system of monitoring lessons. This has helped the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching. In some classes the lesson planning does not take sufficient account of the widely varying stages of development that pupils have reached. This results in inappropriate challenge and underachievement among some groups. Teaching assistants make a sound contribution to learning and behaviour management although, in some classes, they are not always actively involved in supporting pupils' learning, but are merely supervising. Pupils' work is marked regularly but it rarely indicates clearly how pupils can improve their work. There are inconsistencies in the expectations of pupils to present work neatly and they are sometimes allowed to produce poor handwriting and untidy work. Pupils are unclear about the targets they should aim for to reach the next stages in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, although the amount of time allocated to each subject is not well balanced. Sometimes the whole afternoon session is allocated for a single subject. The school is rightly reviewing its learning policy before it begins to undertake a full curriculum review. This review is intended to provide a greater range of creative and practical activities and integrate literacy and numeracy into other subjects. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school enhance pupils' learning. Residential events for the older pupils help to broaden their horizons and improve social skills. The school is successful in developing pupils' awareness of how to stay safe and look after themselves. Popular extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports, extend understanding of the importance of exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There are good links with the local pre-school playgroup which helps new children to settle readily when they start school. Child protection procedures are established and understood by staff. Actions taken to improve attendance and punctuality are beginning to take effect. Links with other

organisations are used well to help pupils and their families. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties has developed well this year, following a period when pupils' needs were not identified nor appropriate measures taken. Good individual education plans are written for these pupils but teachers do not always use them effectively in their lesson planning. The school is establishing good avenues of communication with parents. A recent meeting held with parents to explain the new behaviour management strategy was well attended. Arrangements at lunchtimes are good and ensure that children are happy and occupied. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. Systematic measures to track, support and guide pupils' learning more effectively are being developed. Targets are set for groups of pupils, but not enough is done to ensure that pupils know their individual goals or what they should do to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher and her deputy share a strong commitment to improving the quality of education provided and raising standards. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body appreciates the school's strengths and has clearly recognised the school weaknesses. Governors, ably led by the chair, have introduced a school improvement committee that is already beginning to have an impact on school developments. They work in close association with the senior management team and are rigorous in the way they challenge the school to explain why standards are not higher. Governors report that communication with the school is now much more open. The school has produced a very good school development plan that identifies exactly what it needs to do to raise standards across the school; a top priority is to improve behaviour. A clear behaviour policy has been introduced and behaviour is improving. The school has applied its equal opportunities policy satisfactorily and pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The headteacher's clear direction has improved morale and given the school a renewed impetus. Until recently the monitoring of teacher's performance was unsatisfactory and teachers have not received enough guidance. This led to major inconsistencies in teaching and learning; however, the situation is now being remedied. Finances are managed well and the school has accumulated funds to sustain staffing at current levels.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	4	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	4	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so helpful and for telling us all about the school. There are some good things about the school but there is also quite a lot to do to make sure that you reach the high standards we know you are capable of. You told us that you enjoy school and particularly like making good friends. Most of you are well behaved. You want to learn and you want to do well. Unfortunately there are a number of pupils who do not behave sensibly and their poor behaviour interrupts lessons. You told us that this makes you unhappy because you would much rather get on with your work properly. Many of you have had your learning interrupted by changes of teacher. Your school is well equipped. We think that the new computerised white boards are superb and help you to learn. You have a good understanding of what makes a balanced diet and you know that you must take regular exercise to stay healthy. You like visiting interesting places and the Year 6 four-day visit to East Mersea Camp sounds fun. Your new headteacher and the deputy headteacher have made good plans to improve the school and help you to make better progress. We think that there are quite a few things that the school can do to help you to reach higher standards in your work. The most important is to improve the behaviour of some pupils so that they do not spoil lessons. Most of you behave sensibly and perhaps you could help those who find it more difficult to behave sensibly too. We think that teachers should have clearer advice on how to make lessons more exciting. We think that sometimes work is a bit too easy and that if teachers expected more from you then you could do even better. It would help if you all had clear targets to aim for so that you know what to do to improve your work. We think that there are exciting times ahead and the school will improve. We wish you all every success in the future.